

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 SIL-01 CIAE-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

US MISSION GENEVA 1355

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BRUSSELS ALSO PASS USEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IN

SUBJ: THE INDIAN POLITICAL CRISIS: THE ICFTU AND INDIAN LABOR

REF: BRUSSELS 6419 (NOTAL)

1. THE SECRETARY OF THE ASIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION (ARO) OF THE ICFTU, V. S. HBTHUR, HAS PROVIDED SOME ADDITIONAL DETAILS CONCERNING THE ARO EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING IN BANGKOK, THE MEETING OF ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY KERSTEN WITH MRS. GANDHI, AND THE
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ATTITUDES OF INDIAN LABOR LEADERS IN THE PRESENT CRISIS. MATHUR

SAID THAT THE INDIAN QUESTION WAS NOT DEBATED AT LENGTH AT THE BANGKOK MEETING AND THAT THE INDIAN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTUC AND HMS WERE ESPECIALLY QUIET. AS REPORTED JAKARTA 8483, THE INDIAN QUESTION WAS DEFERRED AT BANGKOK TO ALLOW OTTO KERSTEN THE CHANCE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI WHOM HE SAW ON JULY 12. MATHUR SAID THAT KERSTEN CAME WITH MESSAGES FROM BOTH WILLY BRANDT AND HAROLD WILSON. MATHUR UNDERSTANDS THAT KERSTEN'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WAS CORDIAL, THAT SHE WAS VERY PERSUASIVE, BUT HE DOUBTS THAT SHE CONVINCED KERSTEN OF HER POSITION. MRS. GANDHI REPORTEDLY GAVE ASSURANCES THAT DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS WOULD BE RESTORED. (ANOTHER SOURCE COMMENTING ON THE GANDHI/KERSTEN MEETING TOLD US THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD, POSSIBLY BEFORE JANUARY.)

2. MATHUR INDICATED THAT THE ICFTU HAD NO INTENTION AT PRESENT OF PURSUING THE INDIAN PROBLEM. HE STRESSED THAT SINCE, AT LEAST IN A FORMAL SENSE, TRADE UNION RIGHTS HAD NOT BEEN TOUCHED AND NO TRADE UNION LEADERS HAD BEEN ARRESTED, THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR THE ICFTU TO PROTEST.

3. MATHUR, WHO IS CLOSE TO ALL SENIOR INDIAN TRADE UNION LEADERS, PERSONALLY DOUBTS THAT MRS. GANDHI CAN RETURN TO THE PRE-STATE OF EMERGENCY SITUATION. HE IS CONVINCED THAT TRADE UNION RIGHTS WILL EVENTUALLY BE CURTAILED AND NOTED THAT IN EFFECT THERE IS A BAN ON STRIKES. THE GOI IS CONSIDERING REQUIRING COMPULSORY ARBITRATION. HE THOUGHT THAT ALL THE SENIOR LEADERS OF THE INTUC AND THE HMS WERE UNHAPPY WITH WHAT MRS. GANDHI HAD DONE, DESPITE THEIR PUBLIC UTTERANCES. EVEN INTUC PRESIDENT BHAGAVATI, A CLOSE FRIEND OF CONGRESS PARTY PRESIDENT BAROOAH, PRIVATELY WAS DISPLEASED. MATHUR CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS THERE WAS NOTHING ANYONE COULD DO.

4. WE NOTE IN TODAY'S PRESS, JULY 18, THAT THE WFTU EXTENDS FULL SOLIDARITY TO THE "JUST STRUGGLE OF THE INDIAN WORKERS AND PEOPLE" UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRIME MINISTER GANDHI. THE ABOVE REPORTEDLY WAS CONVEYED BY WFTU SECRETARY MAHENDRA SEN IN A LETTER TO THE LABOR MINISTER, RAGHUNATHA REDDY.
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